

The Influence of Infographics in Accessing Information: Multidimensionality in Visual Representation and Configuration of Different Media

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Abstract

Infographics are powerful tools for presenting information and information design has distinguished itself as a specific discipline that has efficient communication of information as main task. With new online revolution, concept of infographics has evolved by combining several ways of presentation in many formats and there are different denominations; simultaneously, information designers should consider some principles and differences when designing for internet or printed material.

This article presents a theoretical reflection and practical examples that pretend to reflect these matters, trying to create a relationship between infographic typologies, objectives and how information is presented, considering final users. All types of infographics exploded in popularity a few years ago and the amount of information we must filter and understand will continue to grow; information design states itself as one of the best disciplines to share and communicate things we learn.

Keywords: Infographics; Information design; Data visualizations; Visual communication

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Introduction

The online revolution has created a new and additional definition of infographics for internet age. In recent years, people use internet as the first source to look for information or news. Infographics are powerful tools for presenting information and are published as standalone images that provide a visually engaging story giving important data about some kind of thematic. The responsible area for its study, information design, has distinguished itself from the broad field of visual communication, as a specific discipline that has efficient communication of information as the main task. This implies responsibility for content to be at the same time accurate and impartial when presented to users. Technological advance of last years has created several opportunities for contextualization of infographics and designers have explored diverse formats and ways of presentation for visual information. Currently, the concept of infographics has evolved by combining data visualizations, visual narratives, illustrations, 3D representations, text and images in many formats with the purpose of communicate visually complex sets of data or narrative information. Within infographics, there have been some more differentiated denominations such as video infographics; even data visualization has been affirmed as a separate area, due to its very specific characteristics of access to information, closely linked with

programming language and algorithmic data visualization. We can also distinguish some visualization systems that are part of infographics or can be affirmed standalone, as maps, charts, tables or pictograms. All these practices of visual communication are intended to create visual relationships providing information that can sometimes be quite complex and information designers have to consider some aspects such as, facilitating attention, perception, information processing and memory. To schematize implies organizing, abstracting, systematically and progressively reducing the complexity of things (information and phenomena) to a language that makes them visible and thus comprehensible. Besides all these factors that are determinant for the practice of infographics, there are some functional differences that must be considered and analyzed when we think in internet or printed material. Although both cases are guided by the same functional, aesthetic and cognitive principles. With this article, we intend to focus on issues such as: (a) survey of the various typologies/designations of forms of information visualization; (b) what are the main media and formats used; (c) what principle aspects we have to take into account in print or digital contexts. Thus, we present a theoretical framework of information design area and suggest several forms of visual information taking into account the final user; at the end we describe methodology used and consequent findings and conclusions.